

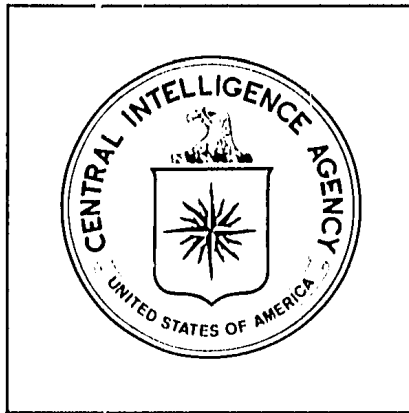
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West. Europe, [REDACTED] Int. Organizations

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WESTERN EUROPE — [REDACTED] — INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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25X6

CONTENTS

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| [REDACTED] | . . . | 1 |
| Majority in Danish Parliament for EC | | |
| 25X6 Referendum | | 2 |
| [REDACTED] | | 3-4 |
| 25X6 [REDACTED] | icultural | |
| | | 5-7 |

January 24, 1975

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Majority in Danish Parliament for EC Referendum

A majority in the Danish parliament favors a referendum on continued membership in the EC if the British referendum in June leads to London's withdrawal, according to a recent media poll.

Parties of the left and right, including the Social Democrats, Denmark's largest party, favor a referendum. These parties hold 110 of the 179 seats in parliament. The center parties, including Prime Minister Hartling's Moderate Liberals, are undecided. Hartling has said, however, that even without the UK, the advantages of continued Danish membership outweigh the disadvantages.

Hartling's future may be short lived. He faces stiff opposition next week when his budget proposals are introduced in parliament. The Prime Minister has said he will resign if his proposals are voted down. The Social Democrats, who would assume government leadership, would be more likely to introduce a referendum.

The true Danish sentiment on the EC issue is difficult to measure. Recent public opinion polls indicate that a majority of Danes oppose continued membership in the EC.

The referendum in 1972 which led to Danish entry into the EC was a hotly contested issue. Nearly two-thirds of the voters cast ballots for market entry, but not before the ruling Social Democrats were badly split and the Prime Minister had resigned.

EC membership remains a very emotional issue and the Danes blame the EC for all their economic ills. A referendum would probably have a sobering effect, however, and the outcome could be closer than the polls predict. (Confidential)

January 24, 1975

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Next 4 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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